

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A process for the continuous preparation of chlorine by reaction of hydrogen chloride with oxygen in the presence of a heterogeneous catalyst, wherein the conversion of hydrogen chloride in a single pass through the reactor is restricted to from 15 to 90%.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein some or all of the unreacted hydrogen chloride is recirculated.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hydrogen chloride conversion in a single pass is restricted to from 20 to 80%.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hydrogen chloride conversion in a single pass is restricted to from 25 to 70%.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hydrogen chloride conversion in a single pass is restricted to from 30 to 60%.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~, wherein the heterogeneous catalyst used

is a doped or undoped supported ruthenium catalyst.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~, wherein the proportion of recirculated hydrogen chloride is gradually increased during the time of operation of the catalyst.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~, wherein the reaction is carried out using from 2 to 10 reactors connected in series.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The process for the continuous preparation of chlorine~~ as claimed in claim 8, wherein the introduction of oxygen is divided over a plurality of reactors.